

# CHOOSING TO COMPETE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



## Responding to Workforce Needs

The latest round of Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grants was designed to address the gap between the skills held by workers and the skills needed by employers for jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than the equivalent of a 4-year degree. The \$4.5 million grant included 15 grant partnerships, involving more than 100 businesses, to benefit 850 job seekers and incumbent employees.

Ten Massachusetts community colleges were awarded the state's first-ever Rapid Response grants to [target the "skills gap"](#). Under this

program, responses to education and workforce training needs are *delivered within 90 days* of a company's request. The success of this program is being measured by the number of incumbent workers that receive training for new skills that lead to greater productivity in the workplace and employee advancement.



*Student at Greenfield Community College.*

The Precision Manufacturing Training Program trained 89 workers including 31 veterans and 44 residents in the Gateways cities of Springfield and Holyoke.

[High-Demand Scholarships](#) were awarded to students pursuing careers for which the state has an urgent need for skilled talent. The program was created by the Massachusetts Legislature to encourage community college, state university, and UMass students to complete degrees in high demand fields. The program assists students majoring in the Commonwealth's growing health care, science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), business and finance sectors, and those planning careers in fields like computer science, engineering, nursing and the life sciences. Of the available scholarships, 52 percent were awarded to UMass students, qualifying them for spring semester scholarships of \$3,250 each. Twenty-eight percent of the scholarships were awarded to state university students, eligible to receive \$2,750 each and 20 percent of the awards went to community college students, who will receive \$2,000 each this semester.

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## Effective Pathways to Middle Skills Jobs

With help from a U.S. Department of Labor grant, our state's community colleges are now delivering [programs](#) with stackable credentials and accelerated schedules to help students more quickly attain a certificate and/or a degree in key fields such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, and information technology. *More than 2200 students have enrolled and almost 900 completed 97 stackable and accelerated programs.* One industry-based workforce strategy emerging from this collaboration is a customized Advanced Manufacturing Competency Model allowing students to earn credit on the job and enter a pathway towards an accelerated associates degree. This strategy is also being replicated across other industries to improve access and *quicker attainment of credentials for students.*

In June 2013, Madison Park Vocational Technical High School and Roxbury Community College established *Massachusetts Academic Polytech Pathway, Roxbury (RoxMAPP)*, an innovative educational and workforce development partnership that will implement new academic and career development programs. This partnership will expose students to career options early and create direct and seamless pathways to employment for students in high-demand industries including health care, information technology, and the life sciences. Beginning this fall, 18 Madison Park juniors from the school's nursing program will start their pathway with two college-level and credit bearing courses at Roxbury Community College and will be eligible for internships.

\$1.1 Million in [Vocational School Equipment Grants](#) were awarded to 25 recipients in 184 cities and towns across Massachusetts. This program provides grant funding to qualifying institutions to purchase necessary equipment to prepare students for the modern workforce.

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